



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

11-DAY WISCONSIN OPERATION NETS 21 FUGITIVE ALIENS *Drug dealer, robber, insurance scammer among those arrested statewide*

MILWAUKEE– U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has arrested 21 fugitive aliens following an 11-day operation that targeted criminal aliens in Wisconsin who were hiding to avoid deportation orders issued by federal judges, announced Michael J. Garcia, Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE and U.S. Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Six of those arrested were aggravated felons with prior convictions that range from drug dealing to bank fraud, battery, and robbery. An additional four have criminal histories ranging from assault to criminal damage to property.

“The 9/11 Commission pointed out that restoring integrity to the nation’s immigration system is essential to ensuring national security,” said Assistant Secretary Garcia. “We’ve made this mission one of our top priorities through initiatives like the National Fugitive Operations Program. We’ve arrested 21 aliens in Wisconsin --including convicted criminals-- who have shown a total disregard for the orders of the immigration court.”

“I’m pleased to see the women and men of ICE taking such bold action in Wisconsin,” said Rep. Sensenbrenner. “Immigration enforcement is probably the most challenging and contentious area of law enforcement there is. Nonetheless, enforcement such as that accomplished by ICE provides balance to our generous immigration system and it’s one of the most important elements of preserving the nation’s security.”

The operation, which began in Madison March 15 and concluded in Milwaukee March 25, was carried out by officers of ICE’s Chicago Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) field office acting under the agency’s National Fugitive Operations Program. ICE launched the program in 2003 to ensure that these fugitives – particularly those with criminal records – are apprehended and deported.

Among the criminal aliens arrested in the Wisconsin operation were:

- José Inez Saavedra, 46, a citizen of Mexico and a convicted drug dealer. Saavedra was arrested at his West Allis residence last Monday. Saavedra was convicted in Waukesha County in 1993 and sentenced to three years in prison. In April 1998 a federal immigration judge ordered him removed from the United States. The Board of Immigration Appeals also denied Saavedra's appeal. In February 2003 Saavedra was ordered deported, but instead elected to ignore the deportation order.
- Obinna Charles Enwereeuzo, a 38-year-old citizen of Nigeria with convictions for bank fraud and theft for filing false claims with an insurance company. Enwereeuzo was arrested last Monday at his Milwaukee residence. Enwereeuzo was ordered deported in 1998 and his appeal was dismissed in 2002. Enwereeuzo was scheduled for deportation in October 2002, but chose to defy the order.

All of those arrested ignored the lawful orders of immigration judges -- in some cases for years -- by refusing to leave the United States, and they posed a continuing threat to public safety. They are counted among the approximately 465,000 fugitive absconder aliens currently hiding in the United States.

The fugitives arrested are from the following countries: Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Macedonia, Mali, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru and Poland.

During the 2004 fiscal year, ICE fugitive alien apprehensions increased by 112 percent nationwide, resulting in 11,063 arrests. ICE's DRO Chicago office arrested 572 fugitive aliens last year, spanning an area of responsibility that includes Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri and Wisconsin. Also last year, ICE deported a record-setting 160,000 aliens; 53 percent were criminal aliens.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.